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SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: BRAZIL: UPDATE ON SPACE COOPERATION

REF: A) BRASILIA 779, B) STATE 87179,
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11. (U) THIS CABLE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED AND NOT FOR
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12. (SBU) SUMMARY. On October 1, 2008, Environment, Science,
Technology and Health Counselor met with Luis Maria Pio Correa, the
Acting Director of the Ministry of External Relations (MRE) Division
of Oceans, Antarctica and Space, to discuss U.S.-Brazil space
cooperation. ESTH Counselor updated the MRE on possible
negotiations regarding the framework space cooperation agreement and
two agreements about specific projects. Pio Correa explained that
the MRE was sending a letter to the Ministry of Science and
Technology, which should allow for the release to the USG of a
fallen U.S. space object it is holding. END SUMMARY

13. (SBU) On October 1, Environment, Science, Technology and Health
(ESTH) Counselor discussed U.S.-Brazil space cooperation with Luis
Maria Pio Correa, the Acting Director of the Ministry of External
Relations (MRE) Division of Oceans, Antarctica and Space (DMAE).
The discussion covered, among other things, three agreements that
the USG was seeking authority to negotiate, the recovery of a fallen
space object, the status of the agreement on the Large Scale
Biosphere-Atmosphere Experiment in Amazonia (LBA) signed in 2006,
and possible sharing of information from the China-Brazil Earth
Resources Satellite (CBERS) to fill the gap that may be left in
remote sensing coverage under the LANDSAT program.

14. (SBU) ESTH Counselor informed Pio Correa that the USG was
seeking authority (i.e., through the C-175 process) to negotiate
three agreements concerning U.S.-Brazil space cooperation. These
agreements are: (1) a framework space cooperation agreement to
replace the current one, which is due to expire at the conclusion of
a one-year extension on January 31, 2009 (see REFTEL A); (2) an
agreement concerning Brazil's participating in the global
precipitation measurement program, led by the United States and
Japan; and (3) an agreement on the study of the ozone to replace an
agreement involving the use of atmospheric balloons for these ozone
studies that expired in September 2008. MRE, the Brazilian Space
Agency (AEB), and the National Space Research Institute (INPE) have
each expressed interest in these agreements.

15. (SBU) With respect to the framework agreement, ESTH Counselor
shared with Pio Correa a copy of the U.S.-French framework agreement
(provided earlier by OES/SAT), which included an acceptable
provision on cross-waiver of liability. That provision is likely to
be the most difficult issue for the U.S.-Brazilian agreement.
Further, ESTH Counselor reiterated the USG interest in arranging
soon an informal discussion between the U.S. and Brazilian lawyers
on that liability issue. Pio Correa said they would seek to arrange

this. COMMENT. Pio Correa noted one complication for negotiations of the framework space cooperation agreement - and possibly the other agreements - is that the Director of the Department of the Environment, which oversees DMAE, Minister Luis Figueiredo Machado, has signaled that he wanted to be personally involved in the negotiations. He had previously been the Director of DMAE. Unfortunately, Figueiredo Machacho also has international climate change negotiations in his wide portfolio and has very little time to devote to space cooperation. END COMMENT.

RECOVERY OF FALLEN SPACE OBJECT

15. (SBU) Pio Correa explained that the MRE was sending a letter to the Ministry of Science and Technology (MCT), which is the parent organization for INPE, to authorize the return to the USG of the fallen space object (REFTELS B and C). He explained that INPE had possession of the object.

EXTENSION OF LBA

16. (SBU) In July 2006, the USG and the GOB signed a renewal of the Implementing Arrangement for Cooperation on Environmental Scientific Research in the Large Scale Biosphere-Atmosphere Experiment in Amazonia Agreement(LBA). The MRE determined that this agreement would need the approval of the Brazilian Congress. Pio Correa stated that the transmittal package was still at the President's Office (Casa Civil) and had not yet been sent to the Congress. He explained that the Casa Civil had been requesting numerous background materials and justifications before sending it to the Congress. He did not say when it would be transmitted, but he expected it would be sent soon.

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POSSIBILITY OF SHARING CBERS DATA

17. (SBU) ESTH Counselor and Pio Correa discussed in general terms the possibility of sharing of data from the China-Brazil Earth Resources Satellite (CBERS) to fill the gap that may be left in coverage under the LANDSAT program. Pio Correa said that he did not see any problem coming from Brazil. He understood, however, that Brazil would need China's permission to share the data from CBERS with the United States.

18. (SBU) Finally, Pio Correa stressed that his small office was understaffed and overworked. He hoped that in the near future they would soon have a new Director of DMAE, which would provide some relief.

19. (SBU) COMMENT. Space cooperation appears to have the support of the Brazilian technical agencies - AEB and INPE - and concurrence of MRE. Nonetheless, the severe shortage of officials at MRE working on space cooperation is slowing the speed with which we can make progress. Goodwill has not been able to compensate for the lack of staff at MRE. It is possible that if the framework space cooperation agreement can be concluded in the mid-term, this success might ease the way for the other two space cooperation agreements. END COMMENT.

SOBEL